

I Introïtus
(*instrumentaal*)

II Die werelt

Suster Bertken:

Die werelt hielt mi in hair gewout
mit haren stricken menichfout.
nu bin ic haer ontcomen.
Och, dat si seer bedriechlic is,
dat heb ic wel vernomen.

Ic bin die werelt af gegaen.
Haer vroechede is also schier ghedaen
in also corten daghen.
Ic en wil die edel siele mijn
niet langer daer in wagen.

Die werelt hielt my in haer ghewalt
mit haren stricken menichfalt.
mijn macht had sy benomen.
si heeft my menich leet gedaen,
eer ic haer bin ontcomen.

Die edele minne boven tijt
die heeft mijn herte seer verblijt,
si wil mi sterven leren.
Waer mi die edel minne stuurt,
daer toe wil ic mi keren.

Ic voel in mi een vonkelkijn,
het lichtet in der siele mijn,
daer bi wil ic mi saten.
Die mynne vermach dat also wel,
een vuur daer af te maken.

Ick voele in my een vonkelkijn,
het roert so dic dat herte mijn
daer wil ick wel op waken
Die min vermach des altemael,
een vuer daer af te maken.

Haddieu, haddieu, nature mijn!
mijn hert dat moet ontcommert sijn
ten mach gheen claghen baten.
dye mijn siel alleen begeert,
hem wil ic nu inlaten.

Haddieu, haddieu, nature mijn!
ghi selt in vreden vrolic sijn.
ic bin so veel doorschoten:
ic neighe in der minnen schoot,
daer bin ic uut ghevloten.

I Introit
(*instrumental*)

II The world

Sister Bertken:

The world held me in its power
while it has many a snare.
I escape now from its hold.
Ah, that it is full of deceit
I have always been aware.

I have left the world behind.
Its joys are rapidly gone
in a matter of mere days.
I will expose my noble soul
no longer to its ways.

The world held me in its power
while it has many a snare.
It took away my strength.
It caused me many a grief
before I escaped at length.

The noble love that surpasses time
has gladdened my heart,
and teaches me to die.
Where that noble love leads me
there will I wend my way.

I feel a little spark inside
that spreads light in my soul,
and to that peace I turn.
Love has the power to make it grow,
to be a fire and burn.

I feel a little spark inside
that often moves my heart
and to that spark I turn.
Love has the power to stir it,
to be a fire and burn.

Adieu, adieu, my earthly self!
my heart must shed its cares
laments will help no more.
He who only wants my soul
I will let in at my door.

Adieu, adieu, my earthly self!
You will find much joy in peace.
I have been deeply moved.
I lay me down in the lap of love,
from which I once came forth.

III Requiem

Prior Dirck van Malsen:

Requiem aeternam dona ei, Domine.
Et lux perpetua luceat ei.
Te decet hymnus, Deus, in Sion,
Et tibi reddetur votum in Jerusalem
Exaudi orationem meam
Ad te omnis caro veniet.

Quae est petitio tua, soror?

Suster Bertken:

Peto Dei misericordiam

Prior:

Accipe regulam istam.
Vis secundum eam vivere in inclusorio?

Suster Bertken:

Volo ita.

Prior:

Vis includi et solitariam vitam
ducere propter Deum?

Suster Bertken:

Volo ita.

Prior:

Vis sic, quamdiu vixeris, permanere?

Suster Bertken:

Volo ita.

Prior:

begint met de constructie van de kluis. Aan het slot van iedere zin wordt een baksteen toegevoegd aan de muur rondom Suster Bertken

Dominus custodiat introitum tuum
et exitum tuum custodiat.
Ex hoc, nunc et usque in seculum.

Omnes sancti Angeli et Archangeli,
orate pro nobis.
Sancte Joannes Baptista,
ora pro nobis.
Omnes sancti Patriarchae et Prophetae,
orate pro nobis.
Sancte Petre, sancte Paule,
ora pro nobis.
Sancte Jacobe, sancte Stephane,

III Requiem

Prior Dirck van Malsen:

Grant her eternal rest, Lord,
and let perpetual light shine on her.
Thou art praised, o God, in Zion,
and homage will be paid to Thee in Jerusalem.
Hear my prayer,
to Thee all flesh will come.

What is your request, Sister?

Sister Bertken:

I seek God's mercy.

Prior:

Accept this rule. Do you wish to live
according to this rule, enclosed?

Sister Bertken:

I do.

Prior:

Do you wish to be walled-in, a recluse, and lead
a lonely life for God?

Sister Bertken:

I do.

Prior:

Will you persevere in this until your dying day?

Sister Bertken:

I will.

Prior:

starts to construct her cell. At the end of every line a brick is added to the wall encircling Sister Bertken

The Lord will watch over your coming
and over your going,
both now and forevermore.

All ye holy angels and archangels,
pray for us.
Saint John the Baptist
pray for us.
All ye holy patriarchs and prophets,
pray for us.
Saint Peter, Saint Paul,
pray for us.
Saint James, Saint Stephen,

sancte Laurenti,
orate pro nobis.

Suster Bertken:

Hec requies mea in seculum seculi,
hic habitabo quoniam eligi eam.

Prior: (*tegelijk met bovenstaande*)

Omnes sancti Martyres,
orate pro nobis.
Sancte Augustine,
ora pro nobis.
Sancta Agnes, sancta Maria Magdalena,
ora pro nobis.
Sancte Francisce,
Omnes sanctae Virgines et Viduae,
orate pro nobis.

Requiem aeternam dona ei, Domine
et lux perpetua luceat ei.
Requiescat in pace.
Amen.

(vanaf de zijkant)

Devote Berte suster brengt haer leven over in seer
swaer ende scerpe penitencie,
haer cleet is des wynters ende des zomers een grof
haren cleet aen haer naecte lyf
mit een grouwen rock die eenvoudich is.
Sy en eet nye vleysch of enighe suvel,
bloetsvoets wesende altyt noch nye vier hebbende.

Ick, broeder Dirck van Malsen,
prior totten regulieren binnen Utrecht,
bewaere die slutelen van suster Berte cluse.

IV Mi quam een schoon geluit

Suster Bertken:

Mi quam een schoon geluit in mijn oren

Saint Lawrence,
pray for us.

Sister Bertken:

This is my place of rest for ever and ever:
here will I dwell, for I have chosen it.

Prior: (*at the same time as the above*)

All ye holy martyrs,
pray for us.
Saint Augustine,
pray for us.
Saint Agnes, Saint Mary Magdalen,
pray for us.
Saint Francis,
all ye holy virgins and widows,
pray for us.

Grant her eternal rest, Lord,
and let perpetual light shine on her.
May she rest in peace.
Amen.

(from the side)

The pious Sister Bertken spends her life
in strict and stringent penitence;
in winter and summer her only garments are
a coarse hair cloth on her naked body
and a simple, grey dress.
She eats no meat nor dairy products,
is always barefoot and has no fire.

I, Brother Dirck of Malsen,
prior with the Regulars at Utrecht,
am keeper of the keys to Sister Bertken's cell.

IV A beautiful sound came

Sister Bertken:

A beautiful sound came to my ears

V Hemelsche Opclimlinge

Doe dye ure na by was,
dat Jhesus, waerachtich God ende mensch,
geboren soude werden,
doe ghevoelde dye moeder Jhesu
sonderlinghe treckinghe of suete eyschinghe in haer,
recht also na ghelic te setten of menigerley snaerspel
waer dat met sonderlinger kunst also geruert worde,
dat een hert, daer dat geluit in viel, met so groter
sueticheit ende jubilacien vervult worde, dat alle de
inwendige crachten ende begeerten daer na neichden
om volcomelic te begripen dye melodye
des sueten geluuds.
Na deser ghelikenisse soe was Maria die moeder
Jhesu, van binnen gheroert ende in ghetogen,
doe die tijt des barens na by was.

Doe si began te gevoelen die hemelsche opclimlinge
haerre inwendiger begeerten,
doe buechde si haer knien totter eerden
met groter oetmoedicheit,
ende openbaerde also
dat si bereyt was dyenstachtich te wesen
des wonderlyken wercks
dat God wercken soude doer haer.
In deser jubilacien daer si in was,
so waren grote scaren van engelen omtrint Maria.

Daer ghevoelde Maria seer wonderlike jubilacie,
op ende neder climmende
met seer sueten geluyde vol melodyen,
Doe sy haer aldus vol weelden bevoelde
ende die godlike radien so crachtelick
uitschonen tot haerre herten
sy began heet te werden ende doorschynich,
doe stont sy haestelick op
ende maecte haer altemael bloot
tot enen clede toe dat haren live dat naeste was.

Aldus stont die gloriose moeder
van bynnen blenckende
in hoger claerheyt met onderscheidenheyt,
hooch ende noch hogher,
ende was over al haer preciose lichaem vucht,
recht of si bedauwet had geweest,
ende gaf soe sueten roke van haer.
Si was niet alleen sonder wee
mer vol hemelsche weelde

V The raising up to Heaven

When the hour was approaching,
when Jesus, fully God and man,
would be born,
the mother of Jesus felt
a strong suspense or sweet desire inside her,
comparable to when some stringed instrument
is so skilfully played that a heart,
touched by the sound, is filled
with such sweetness and jubilation
that such a person's inner strength
and desires would be aimed at
embracing the sweet sound entirely.
In the same way Mary, mother of Jesus,
was thus touched and turned in on herself,
when her time for giving birth had come.

When she began to feel the ascent to heaven
of her inner feelings,
she bent her knees down to earth,
in great meekness,
and thus revealed
that she was prepared to be a servant
to the miraculous work
God would perform through her.
In her state of jubilation,
Maria was surrounded by a host of angels.

Then Mary felt a very wonderful jubilation,
rising and falling,
with a most sweet, melodious sound.
When she felt thus filled with delight
and the divine rays shone brightly
deep into her heart
she began to tingle and to be transparent;
then she stood up hastily
and undressed down to the garment
she wore next to her body.

Thus the glorious mother stood
shining with great clarity inside
and in varying degrees,
higher and higher still,
and her whole precious body was moist
as if dew had fallen on her
and a sweet fragrance issued from her.
She was not only without pain,
but full of heavenly joy.

(gezang van engelen offstage)

Aldus stont si verheven vander eerden,
omset met veel enghelen
die haer te dyenst stonden,
ende die bedauwinghe scheen recht
van haren preciosen lichaem,
of sy om vanghen hadde gheweest mit een clær
blenckende wolcke daer doer schenen
die radyen des godliken lichts,
daer si van binnen vol van was.
So ghinghen uut van die haren haers hoofdes
ende van haren ghehelen lichaem
onbegripelike veel schijnselen,
stralen der hoger godliker claerheit,

Sy clam op vander eenre hemelscher weelden
in dye ander ende werdt, so jubilerende,
op ghetogen ende in gheleydt
tot int hoogste ende diepste.
So baerde God in haren gheest
so hoghe onbegrypelicheit,
dat haer gheest so overhoochlick vervruechde,
dat si vander ghewoenliker jubilacien
stillede ende ruste.

VI Dat suete, saerte kint Jhesus

Doe sy aldus stille in wonderliken vrede was,
ende haer gheest seer hooch verheven was,
doe baerde die moeder Gods haren sone
alsoe snellike sonder hinder oft quetsinghe,
als een pyle dye doer die lucht vliecht,
also als die pile vander lucht niet gescut
oft ghehindert wordt,
noch die lucht niet ghequest werdt vander pile,
alsoe quam voert dye Soon Gods onghehindert,
ende dye moeder Gods bleef onghequest.
Hier na werdt die moeder Jhesu,
die in wonderliken vrede rustende was,
met dyenst der enghelen seer sachtelic
neder ghelaten opter eerden.

Doe die moeder Jhesu hoorde een cleyn stemme
die menschelick gheluut had,
doe creech sy haestelick weder ghedenckenisse
ende sloech haer heilighe oghen neder opter eerden
ende sach haren weerden sone, onsen Heer.

(angels singing offstage)

Thus she stood, raised from the earth
surrounded by many angels
who were at her service
and the dew shone forth
from her precious body,
as if she was surrounded by a clear
cloud through which shone
the divine rays of light
that filled her.
From the hair on her head
and her whole body
a wondrous multitude of rays shone forth,
light of a high, divine lustre.

She ascended from one heavenly joy
to the next, and was, thus rejoicing,
raised up and taken in
to the highest and the deepest.
Thus God gave birth in her soul
to the most inexplicable
making her soul's joy so great
that her earthly, everyday joys
turned to quiet stillness.

VI The sweet, gentle child Jesus

When she was thus filled with miraculous
peace, and her soul was raised on high,
then the mother of God gave birth to her son
as quickly and without pain or injury,
as an arrow that slides through the air,
and is not hindered nor obstructed
by the air,
nor is the air injured by the arrow,
thus the Son of God came to earth unobstructed
and the mother of God remained unharmed.
Then the mother of Jesus,
who was resting in miraculous peace,
was lowered, with the help of angels,
back to earth.

When Jesus' mother heard a small voice
with a human sound,
her sense of the world returned
and casting her holy eyes down to earth
she saw her sweet son, our Lord.

Uut hogher minnen begheerte nam si
met groter weerdicheit haren geminden sone Ihesum
in haren heyligen armen ende druchten aen haer
borsten seer begeerlic ende custen voer sinen sueten
mont seer minlic.

Dat suete kint voechde hem also suetelic aen dye
borst zynre weerder moeder
ende omvencse met sinen heylighen armen,
ende Jhesus die druce hem selven so minlic aen sijn
lyeve moeder,
dat sy daer doer grote jubilacie ghevoelde.
Met deser overhogher minnen begheerte nam dye
gloriose moeder Gods haren
gheminden sone aen haerre herten,
ende custen met sueter begheerten.

Ende die moeder Jhesu nam
den sueten Jhesum, haren gheminden sone,
onsen Heere, ende wanten in doecken
ende leyden neder in een cribbe.
Doe screyde dat suete saerte kint Jhesus:

VII Hodie mecum eris in paradiso

Jezus :

Hodie mecum eris in paradiso.
Pater, in manus tuas commendo spiritum meum.

Prior:

Op sunte lebuyns dach in die zomer
int iaer ons heren 1514
is ghevaren van eertriken die devote maghet
Berta Iacobsdochter, vol goeder heyligher werken,
doe sy out was seven ende tachtich iaer.

Doe sy hare scarpe penitencie
ghedaen had seven ende vyftich iaer,
is sy gherust in den Heer in haer cluse
aen die Buerkercke tUtrecht.
Ende sy heeft begheert begraven te syn op die selver
stede daer sy haer penitencie volbrocht heeft,
dat also gesciet is.
Die slutelen van suster Berte cluse
heb ick altyt bewaert.

Suster Bertken:

(op de achtergrond, tegelijk met bovenstaande)
Hec requies mea in seculum seculi,
hic habitabo quoniam eligi eam.

In her desire for heavenly love
she reverently took her beloved son Jesus
in her holy arms, pressing him longingly
to her breast and kissed him
lovingly on his sweet lips.

The sweet child nestled just as sweetly
against his dear mother's breast
grasping it with his holy arms,
and Jesus so lovingly pressed himself
against his dear mother's breast
that she felt great jubilation.

In her longing for this great love
the glorious mother of God
pressed her son to her heart,
and kissed him in sweet longing.

And Jesus' mother took
The sweet Jesus, her darling son,
our Lord, wrapped him in swaddling cloths
and laid him in a manger.
Then the dear, sweet baby Jesus cried:

VII This day you will be with me in Paradise

Jesus :

This day you will be with me in Paradise.
Father, into Thy hands I commit my spirit.

Prior:

On the day of Saint Lebuinus, in the summer,
of the year of our Lord 1514,
the devout virgin bade farewell to the earth,
Berta Jacob's daughter, of many good and holy
works, when she was eighty-seven years old.

When she had persisted in her penance
for fifty-seven years
she found rest in the Lord in her cell
at the Buurkerk in Utrecht.
And it was her wish to be buried
in the place where she fulfilled her penance
and that was done.
The keys to Sister Bertken's cell
I have always kept.

Sister Bertken: *(in the background, at the same time as the above)*

This is my place of rest for ever and ever:
here will I dwell, for I have chosen it.